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August 22, 1960



MEMORANDUM OF MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT
August 18, 1960, 11:05 AM

Present: Secretaries Gates, Dillon, Anderson, Generals Persons, Lemnitzer, Goodpaster, Mr. Allen Dulles, Mr. Bissell, Mr. Gordon Gray

Mr. Gray opened the meeting by saying that in March the President had approved planning with respect to anti-Castro activity in Cuba at which time it was agreed that as planning progressed and any activist measures impended, the matter would be brought back to the President. Mr. Gray indicated that Mr. Dulles was prepared to speak.

Mr. Dulles said first that he wished to say a word about the U-2 pilot, Powers. He said that it was obvious that the Soviets were trying to portray Powers as a country bumpkin, exploited by the moneyed interests in the U. S. Mr. Dulles said that he wished to inform the President that Powers was on the contrary a knowledgeable person, and had been in the U. S. just last year and at that time he re-signed his contract after a long talk about his life and plans for the future. He then indicated that he wanted to retire in about a year inasmuch as he had saved enough money to acquire a home and he wished to bring Mrs. Powers back to this country. Mr. Dulles said so far that the Powers testimony had been all right so far as the intelligence angle was concerned. This is to say he had not in any way made damaging disclosures. Perhaps from the propaganda point of view his testimony was less satisfactory. As an example, Mr. Dulles said that Powers knew the instrumentation on the plane backwards and forwards, contrary to his testimony.

In response to a question, Mr. Dulles said he did not think that Powers had been brain-washed but perhaps "brain-conditioned."

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Turning to Cuba, Mr. Dulles said that generally contemplated in the planning approved by the President in March had been four courses of action.

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1. There has been developed a unified Cuban opposition outside of the country. This has been successful up to a point but the problem is that there is no real leader and all the individuals are prima donnas. This unified opposition is known as the FRD and has six prominent members, five of them representing groups in Cuba with the greatest potential. In response to a question from the President, Mr. Dulles said that all the names were favorably known in Cuba; that there were no Batista-ites among them and all the names had been published except a recent joiner, Cardona. Their theme is to restore the revolution to its original concepts, recognizing that it is impossible to change all of the revolutionary trends. Further in response to a question from the President, Mr. Dulles said that practically all of these have been identified with Castro since he assumed power, most of them in the very early period.

Mr. Dulles also indicated that his people had been, since May, working in a very satisfactory way with the church.

The FRD has its headquarters in Mexico. They would prefer to be in the U.S. but had been persuaded to go to Mexico. It should be understood that there will be no ostensible military action directed from Mexico.

The President asked why Mexico had been chosen and Mr. Dulles replied that it had better communications and travel facilities and certain others of the Latin American countries would not accept the presence of the FRD. The U. S. does not wish any open identification with Guatemala and specifically Venezuela and Colombia would not cooperate. He added, however, that the Guatemalan President had been very cooperative.

2. Radio. Mr. Dulles reported as to the Swan Island operation which is broadcasting on both medium and short-wave. It started by attacking Trujillo. It is jammed in Havana on medium wave but apparently reception is all right outside of Havana. The short-wave is satisfactory throughout Cuba. It is under commercial cover.

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The President wished to know whether the commentators were well known figures and received an affirmative response.

Mr. Dulles also reported with respect to a magazine now being published in Venezuela and a newspaper in Miami. He also described the WRUL operation and also radio operations in Miami and Guatemala. Furthermore there would soon be a clandestine radio operating from Guatemala.

The President, in response to a question, was assured that Swan Island was attacking both Trujillo and Castro.

3. Para-military. Mr. Dulles reported that training of 20 or 30 instructor cadres has been finished in the Canal Zone and these individuals now go to Guatemala to instruct about 500 Cubans. In addition, there are 34 radio operators in training in Guatemala. There is an available airstrip in Guatemala and all of these activities are under the auspices of the FRD.

He indicated that there will be a need for some air force trainers and logistic support people. These would be military personnel (15 or 20 in all) under cover. Mr. Gates observed that he was not too much worried about the trainers but was concerned about a later phase in which the possibility had been mentioned of having some U. S. military who might be involved in going across the beaches:

Mr. Bissell replied that the 15 or 20 referred to would be concerned with the movement of C-54s; that they would be in civilian clothes with false names and most of them are already assigned to the Central Intelligence Agency. There would be no conceivable hazard involved and they would get no closer to para-military operations than the airstrip in Guatemala.

4. Operational forces. Mr. Bissell then said with respect to planning for the later action phase, to which Secretary Gates had referred, the need is felt for a standby force preferably of non-Americans with special forces type training. There ensued some discussion as to whether the backup force should contain American officers and possibly men and Mr. Gates again expressed his concern. Mr. Dulles suggested that this matter not be discussed now and should

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be re-examined in concert with the JCS. Mr. Gray pointed out that it would be unwise to mount any kind of an operation without the determination to see it through and that an abortive effort would be worse than no effort at all. He therefore thought that if this backup force was essential to ultimate success, full consideration should be given to it at this stage in the planning. Mr. Dulles again urged that a decision on this be deferred.

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The discussion then turned to present plans for training in Guatemala. General Lemnitzer saw no problem in the request for trainers as outlined by Mr. Bissell.

Mr. Dulles then said that he hoped that the training of the 500 Cubans could be finished around about the beginning of November and they could be ready if the logistics could be worked out by that time. The FRD is acquiring some B-26s. The aircrews for these would be all Cubans.

Mr. Bissell then said that it is possible that the initial para-military operations could be successful without any outside help. He pointed out that the first phase would be that of contacting local groups over a period of perhaps several months and in this period no air strikes would be undertaken. The plan would be to supply the local groups by air and also to infiltrate certain Cubans to stiffen local resistance.

If local resistance is unable to accomplish the mission and the operation should expand, then there may be a requirement for air action. The plan would be to take the Isle of Pines or another small island for an ostensible base for operations of the "Restore the Revolution" forces. It is hoped that this may not be needed but we must be prepared for it.

Mr. Bissell said there had been identified no less than eleven groups or alleged groups in Cuba with potential. We are in the process of sending radio communications to them at this time.

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Budget. Mr. Dulles said that he had arrived at the point at which it was necessary to go to the reserve for funds to finance the various operations described in the meeting. He felt that we were talking in terms of \$10 million in addition to the \$3.8 million already spent, including the funds for Swan Island, etc.

The President said that he would go along so long as the Joint Chiefs, Defense, State and CIA think we have a good chance of being successful. He wouldn't care much about this kind of cost; indeed, he said he would defend this kind of action against all comers and that if we could be sure of freeing the Cubans from this incubus, \$25 million might be a small price to pay.

The President concluded the meeting by saying that he would like to urge caution with respect to the danger of making false moves, with the result of starting something before we were ready for it.

G. B.

Gordon Gray

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